



RTCA in Vermont

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. The National Park Service (NPS) staff provide technical assistance to community groups, city, county, tribal governments, and non-profit organizations working to enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation opportunities. We help local leaders plan and design trails and parks; conserve and improve access to natural areas; protect special places; and create recreation opportunities.

The RTCA program in Vermont offers a wide range of services that can be tailored to meet the needs of an individual project. The NPS staff members are trained facilitators who encourage project leaders to build collaborative partnerships among governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. The program helps communities and groups define their vision, goals, and objectives; analyze issues and opportunities; and develop strategic action plans and time lines for projects. We do not provide financial assistance, but can help project partners identify and secure sources of funding and technical support.

Any community with committed project partners can apply for assistance. Believing the best plans are completed locally, the National Park Service will work with partners to encourage broad-based community participation in planning, designing, and implementing the projects we support.

In 2016, the National Park Service in Vermont will work on a variety of projects including:

- **Boots to Boats Centennial Events** – The project goal is to celebrate the National Park Service's Centennial through a summer-long series of public hikes, paddles, educational events and service work days spanning the Upper Valley from the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park to the Appalachian Trail to Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site. (Location: Woodstock, Vermont to Cornish, New Hampshire)
- **Gilbert's Hill Conservation Project** – The project goal is to work with partner organizations to permanently protect Gilbert's Hill, the site of the first ski tow in America, and assist in planning for links from there to the Appalachian Trail and the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. (Location: Pomfret, Vermont)
- **Manchester Riverwalk** – The project goal is to develop the Battenkill River corridor through Manchester as a community asset by expanding recreational access, interpreting cultural history, and restoring its ecological integrity as a premiere trout fishing river. (Location: Manchester, Vermont)
- **Mount Tom Gateway** – The project goal is to significantly enhance the safety, preservation, sustainability and accessibility of three historic gateway trails through Faulkner Park and Billings Park to the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. (Location: Woodstock, Vermont)
- **Western New England Greenway** – The project goal is to establish a 3-state bike touring route from New York City to Montreal, Canada. (Location: New York City, New York to Montreal, Canada)
- **White River Connectivity Project** – The project goal is to create a network of public access areas in the White River watershed as a model for improving working relationships between watershed towns related to river, floodplain, and public access management. The network builds on 50+ FEMA Hurricane Irene buyout properties in 11 towns. (Location: White River Watershed, Vermont)



Hikers check out a trail map at a Centennial Boots to Boats hike.

Recent Success Story

The Faulkner Trail Restoration: A Beloved Historic Resource Finds an Important New Purpose – The Faulkner Trail is a beloved local gem in Woodstock, Vermont, and its restoration is creating a new model of national outdoor accessibility. Built in 1936 by Marianne Faulkner in memory of her husband Edward, the gentle switchback trail climbs Mount Tom's rocky slopes for 1.7 miles to a glorious view of the river valley. The Trail was modeled on the cardiac rehabilitation trails in Baden-Baden, Germany, where the Faulknors went to try to find respite for Edward's crippling arthritis. But since 1936 the Faulkner Trail has deteriorated, becoming less accessible, more damaged and eroded, and more difficult for some to use. At the same time it's become more popular, as a gateway into the new Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. Restoring the trail became a unique opportunity to create an accessible trail, making the beauty of Mount Tom open to all. A broad partnership, including youth crews, was formed to launch the multi-year restoration that continues today.

For more information about the RTCA program refer to: www.nps.gov/rtca, or for information about ongoing or potential RTCA projects in Vermont contact:

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